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DONALD R HOLLAND  
HOWELL & HAUSERKAMP  
7733 FORSYTH BOULEVARD  
SUITE 1400  
ST LOUIS, MO 63105

EXAMINER

MURPHY, JOSEPH F

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1646

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22

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/220,920

Applicant(s)

MILBRANDT ET AL.

Examiner

Joseph F Murphy

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 February 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 11, 12, 15-27, 39 and 40 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1 and 11 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 12, 15-29, 39-40 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

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## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Formal Matters***

The Finality of the Previous Office Action, Paper No. 20, 12/26/2001 has been withdrawn in light of the new grounds of rejection, set forth below.

Claims 15 and 23 were amended in Paper No. 21, 3/13/2002. Claims 1, 11, 12, 15-27, 39 and 40 are pending. Claims 1 and 11 stand withdrawn from consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b). Claims 12, 15-29, 39-40 are under consideration.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112 first paragraph***

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claim 27 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, because the specification, while being enabling for a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 54-59, does not reasonably provide enablement for a nucleic acid encoding variant having at least 88% amino acid sequence identity to SEQ ID NO: 54-59. The specification does not enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the invention commensurate in scope with these claims.

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Claim 27 is overly broad in the recitation of "is at least 88% identical" since no guidance is provided as to which of the myriad of encoded polypeptide species encompassed by the claim will retain the characteristics of artemin. The specification (page 20, lines 27-30), Applicants disclose that the artemin polypeptide can also include modifications of the artemin sequences including sequences in which one or more amino acid have been inserted, deleted or replaced with a different amino acid, without disclosing any actual or prophetic examples on expected performance parameters of any of the possible muteins of artemin. However, it is known in the art that even single amino acid changes or differences in the amino acid sequence of a protein can have dramatic effects on the protein's function. For example, Mikayama et al. (1993) teaches that the human glycosylation-inhibiting factor (GIF) protein differs from human migration inhibitory factor (MIF) by a single amino acid residue (page 10056, Figure 1). Yet, despite the fact that these proteins are 90% identical at the amino acid level, GIF is unable to carry out the function of MIF, and MIF does not exhibit GIF bioactivity (page 10059, second column, third paragraph). It is also known in the art that a single amino acid change in a protein's sequence can drastically affect the structure of the protein and the architecture of an entire cell. Voet et al. (1990) teaches that a single Glu to Val substitution in the beta subunit of hemoglobin causes the hemoglobin molecules to associate with one another in such a manner that, in homozygous individuals, erythrocytes are altered from their normal discoid shape and assume the sickle shape characteristic of sickle-cell anemia, causing hemolytic anemia and blood flow blockages (pages 126-128, section 6-3A and page 230, column 2, first paragraph).

There is no guidance provided in the specification as to how one of ordinary skill in the art would generate a nucleic acid encoding an artemin polypeptide other than those exemplified

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in the specification. See *In re Wands*, 858 F.2d at 737, 8 USPQ2d at 1404. The test of enablement is not whether any experimentation is necessary, but whether, if experimentation is necessary, it is undue. The factors considered to be relevant in the instant case are set forth below:

(1) the breadth of the claims - The claims encompass a nucleic acid encoding variant having at least 88% amino acid sequence identity to SEQ ID NO: 54-59.

(2) the nature of the invention - The instant invention is a nucleic acid encoding variant having at least 88% amino acid sequence identity to SEQ ID NO: 54-59.

(3) the state of the prior art - The Mikayama and Voet references demonstrate that even single amino acid changes or differences in the amino acid sequence of a protein can have dramatic effects on the protein's function.

(5) the level of predictability in the art - The Mikayama and Voet references demonstrate the unpredictability of the protein art.

(6) the amount of direction provided by the inventor - The claim does not contain any information on the expected functional properties of the encoded protein.

(7) the existence of working examples - Working examples are provided wherein artemin promotes survival of peripheral neurons. In the instant claims, there is no functional limitation.

(8) the quantity of experimentation needed to make or use the invention based on the content of the disclosure. Given the breadth of claim 27 in light of the predictability of the art as determined by the number of working examples, the level of skill of the artisan, and the guidance provided in the instant specification and the prior art of record, it would require undue experimentation for one of ordinary skill in the art to make and use the claimed invention.

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The claims included in the instant rejection are overly broad in that the encoded protein has no functional limitation. The only nucleic acid species provided in the disclosure encodes promotes the survival of peripheral neurons. Therefore, it would require undue experimentation for one of skill in the art to make and use the invention as claimed.

Claim 27 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. Applicant is directed to the Guidelines for the Examination of Patent Applications Under the 35 U.S.C. 112, ¶ 1 "Written Description" Requirement, Federal Register, Vol. 66, No. 4, pages 1099-1111, Friday January 5, 2001.

This is a genus claim. According to the specification, the term variant means a protein having one or more amino acid substitutions, deletions, insertions and/or additions made to SEQ ID NO: 54-59. The specification and claim do not indicate what distinguishing attributes shared by the members of the genus. The specification and claim do not place any limit on the number of amino acid substitutions, deletions, insertions and/or additions that may be made to SEQ ID NO: 54-59. Thus, the scope of the claim includes numerous structural variants, and the genus is highly variant because a significant number of structural differences between genus members is permitted. Although the specification states that these types of changes are routinely done in the art, the specification and claim do not provide any

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guidance as to what changes should be made. Structural features that could distinguish compounds in the genus from others in the protein class are missing from the disclosure. No common structural attributes identify the members of the genus. The general knowledge and level of skill in the art do not supplement the omitted description because specific, not general, guidance is what is needed. Since the disclosure fails to describe the common attributes or characteristics that identify members of the genus, and because the genus is highly variant, SEQ ID NO: 54-59 alone is insufficient to describe the genus. One of skill in the art would reasonably conclude that the disclosure fails to provide a representative number of species to describe the genus. Thus, applicant was not in possession of the claimed genus.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112 second paragraph***

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 12, 15-22, 25, 26, 39, 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 12 and 25 are vague and indefinite in the recitation of "8 contiguous amino acids" because it is unclear which polypeptide the 8 contiguous amino acids refers to, therefore the metes and bounds of the claims cannot be determined.

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A broad range or limitation together with a narrow range or limitation that falls within the broad range or limitation (in the same claim) is considered indefinite, since the resulting claim does not clearly set forth the metes and bounds of the patent protection desired. Note the explanation given by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences in *Ex parte Wu*, 10 USPQ2d 2031, 2033 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1989), as to where broad language is followed by "such as" and then narrow language. The Board stated that this can render a claim indefinite by raising a question or doubt as to whether the feature introduced by such language is (a) merely exemplary of the remainder of the claim, and therefore not required, or (b) a required feature of the claims. Note also, for example, the decisions of *Ex parte Steigewald*, 131 USPQ 74 (Bd. App. 1961); *Ex parte Hall*, 83 USPQ 38 (Bd. App. 1948); and *Ex parte Hasche*, 86 USPQ 481 (Bd. App. 1949). In the present instance, claims 12, 15 and 25 recites the broad recitation "at least 8 contiguous amino acids", and the claim also recites 88% identical to SEQ ID NO: 26 which is the narrower statement of the range/limitation. Claims 16-22, 26, 39, 40 are rejected due to their dependence on claims 12, 15 and 25.

Claims 12, 15, 25 are vague and indefinite in the recitation of the term "biologically equivalent". The term "biologically equivalent " is not defined by the claim, but give no definition of what this activity is. Various biological activities can be attributed to a peptide. For example, "biologically equivalent" could constitute transportation throughout a cell, alteration of tertiary structure due to changes in pH, ligand binding, or modulation of second messenger effect, etc. 'Biologically equivalent' could also be referring to the ability of the fragment to stimulate antibody production. Claims 16-22, 26, 39, 40 are rejected due to their dependence on claims 12, 15 and 25.

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Claims 12, 15 and 25 are indefinite in the recitation of the term "naturally occurring". It is unclear whether this term imposes a required limitation on the claim, such that it only encompasses, for example, polynucleotides amplified from human cDNA, or only sequences produced by digestion with restriction enzymes of DNA isolated from tissue which contains polynucleotides encoding the polypeptide, or if the claim encompasses all polynucleotide sequences that encode the polypeptide. Therefore, the metes and bounds of the claim are unclear. Claims 16-22, 26, 39, 40 are rejected due to their dependence on claims 12, 15 and 25.

Claim 12 is vague and indefinite in the recitation of "active domain", as it is not clear what activity is required of the claimed domain, therefore the metes and bounds of the claim cannot be determined.

Claim 23 is vague and indefinite whether the polypeptide comprising a human or mouse artemin is one of the list comprising SEQ ID NO: 26, 29, 32, 40, 41, or if it is to be additionally encoded by the amino acid, e.g. as a fusion protein. Claim 24 is rejected insofar as it depends on claim 24.

### ***Conclusion***

Claims 12, 15-27, 39-40 are rejected.

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***Advisory Information***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joseph F. Murphy whose telephone number is 703-305-7245. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Yvonne Eyler can be reached on 703-308-6564. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-305-3014 for regular communications and 703-308-0294 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0196.



Joseph F. Murphy, Ph. D.  
Patent Examiner  
Art Unit 1646  
April 4, 2002

*David S. Romeo*  
DAVID S. ROMEO  
PRIMARY EXAMINER